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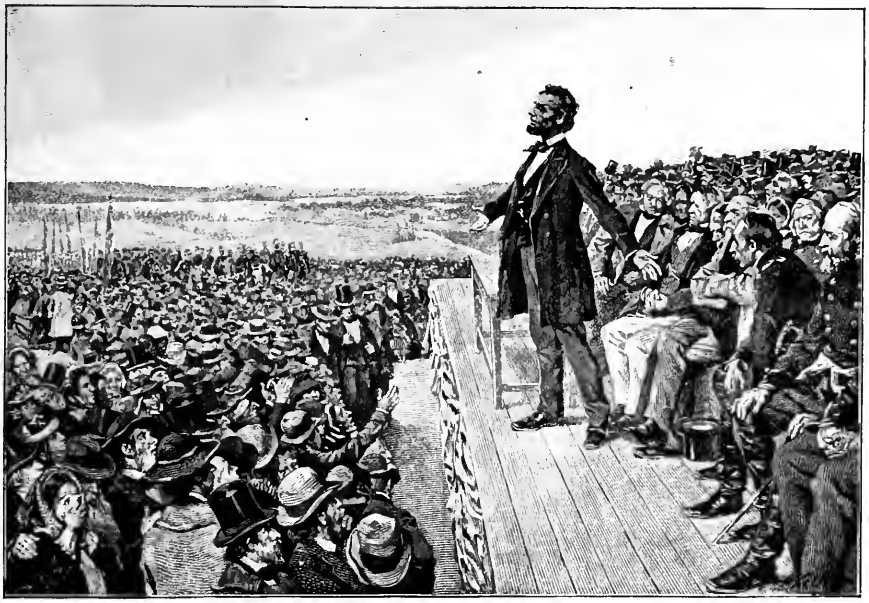
School Library Bulletin

February 12th, 1909 Lincoln Centenary



THE ADDRESS AT GETTYSBURG

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LINCOLN AT GETTYSBURG.

From the "Gettysburg Ode."
(November 19, 1863.)

After the eyes that looked, the lips that spake
Here, from the shadows of impending death,
Those words of solemn breath,
What voice may fitly break
The silence, doubly hallowed, left by him?
We can but bow the head, with eyes grown dim,
And, as a Nation's litany, repeat
The phrase his martyrdom hath made complete,
Noble as then, but now more sadly sweet:
"Let us, the Living, rather dedicate
Ourselves to the unfinished work, which they
Thus far advanced so nobly on its way,
And save the perilled State!
Let us, upon this field where they, the brave,
Their last full measure of devotion gave,
Highly resolve they have not died in vain!—
That, under God, the Nation's later birth
Of Freedom, and the people's gain
Of their own Sovereignty, shall never wane
And perish from the circle of the earth!"
From such a perfect text, shall song aspire
To light her faded fire,
And into wandering music turn
Its virtue, simple, sorrowful, and stern?
His voice all elegies anticipated:
For whatsoe'er the strain,
We hear that one refrain:
"We consecrate ourselves to them, the Consecrated!"

—BAYARD TAYLOR.

1809 ABRAHAM LINCOLN. 1909

There is nothing new to add to the story on the one hundredth anniversary of Lincoln's birth. It has all been told to you over and over again, and it will still be told to children as long as the language lasts; for it has that in it which never grows old.

There is not a boy born into the world to-day in greater poverty or more lowly circumstances than surrounded Abraham Lincoln a century ago, yet he rose by his own efforts, by sheer force of character to be the leader of a great nation and to occupy a unique place in the history of the world. This is the message of hope that the story of his boyhood brings or should bring to every child in the land.

The immortal words which he spoke at Gettysburg and in his second inaugural address you will not appreciate now, as you will learn to appreciate them later, but you cannot fail to be touched by a recital of the simple facts of Lincoln's early life with all its struggles and hardships. Every boy and girl in America ought to read and, if possible, own, a life of Abraham Lincoln, and, as you read, take note especially

of what good books did for him and of how they helped him. There were no free books in his day, no free pencils and paper. He worked his arithmetic lessons on a pine board with a piece of charcoal by the light of the fire in a log cabin. All the schooling he managed to get between times when he could be spared from work amounted, altogether, to less than a year. But he learned to read and he learned to love books, and then whenever one could be found in the neighborhood, he would borrow it and read it. He was far too poor to buy any himself and there were very few books in that part of Indiana in which he lived until he was of age, but there were some exceedingly good ones.

"Abraham's poverty of books," says J. G. Holland, "was the wealth of his life." He first read Aesop's fables, Robinson Crusoe, Pilgrim's Progress and the Bible. He walked many miles after a hard day's work in the fields to obtain a book he had heard of and sat late into the night before the fire poring over the adventures of the shipwrecked sailor and his man Friday, or the struggles of Bunyan's famous hero on his way to the "Celestial City."

As you turn the leaves of some of the beautifully bound and attractively illustrated books in your school or nearby public libraries, just think for a moment of your opportunities and what they would have meant to that barefoot boy on the Indiana frontier.

Perhaps the book that had the greatest influence on Lincoln's life was the first book he owned, a copy of Weems's "Life of Washington." He first borrowed it from a neighbor, named Crawford, and when he crawled up into the loft at night, he hid the prized volume in a chink between the logs. It rained hard during the night and in the morning the book was found soaked through. He tried to dry it out, but it was impossible to repair the damage, and the next day Abraham was obliged to take the book back to the owner and offered to pay for it. He had no money, but he worked for three whole days at twenty-five cents a day in Mr. Crawford's cornfield and then came home triumphantly with the book in his pocket.

On the 21st of February, 1861, when Abraham Lincoln was on his way to Washington to be inaugurated, he was requested by the Senate of New Jersey to address them. In his speech, he said:

"May I be pardoned if, upon this occasion, I mention that away back in my childhood, the earliest days of my being able to read, I got hold of a small book, such a one as few of the younger members have ever seen—Weems's 'Life of Washington.' I remember all the accounts there given of the battlefields and struggles for the liberties of the country, and none fixed themselves upon my imagination so deeply as the struggle here at Trenton, New Jersey. The crossing of the river, the contest with the Hessians, the great hardships endured at that time, all fixed themselves on my memory more than any single Revolutionary event; and you all know, for you have all been boys, how these early impressions last longer than others. I recollect thinking then, boy even though I was, that there must have been something more than common that these men struggled for. I am exceedingly anxious that that thing—that something even more than national independence; that something that held out a great promise to all the people of the world for all time to come—I am exceedingly anxious that this Union, the Constitution, and the liberties of the people shall be perpetuated in accordance with the original idea for which that struggle was made, and I shall be most happy, indeed, if I shall be a humble instrument in the hands of the Almighty, and of this, his almost chosen people, for perpetuating the object of that great struggle."

Some books about Lincoln for young people to read and own.

BIOGRAPHIES.

Brooks, E. S.—True Story of Abraham Lincoln.
Baldwin, James.—Abraham Lincoln.
Brooks, Noah.—Abraham Lincoln.
Coffin, C. C.—Life of Lincoln.
Curtis, W. E.—The True Abraham Lincoln.
Morgan, James.—Abraham Lincoln, Boy and Man.
Nicolay, Helen.—Boy's Life of Abraham Lincoln.
Putnam, M. L.—Children's Life of Lincoln.
Schurz, Carl.—Abraham Lincoln.
Tarbell, Ida M.—Early Life of Lincoln.

STORIES.

Andrews, M. R. S.—The Perfect Tribute.
Butterworth, H.—In the Boyhood of Lincoln.
Stoddard, W. O.—The Boy Lincoln.
Tarbell, I. M.—He Knew Lincoln.

LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE.

When the Norn-Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour,
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,
She bent the strenuous heavens and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road—
Clay warm yet with the genial heat of Earth,
Dashed through it all a strain of prophecy;
Then mixed a laughter with the serious stuff.
It was a stuff to wear for centuries,
A man that matched the mountains, and compelled
The stars to look our way and honor us.

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;
The tang and odor of the primal things—
The rectitude and patience of the rocks;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn;
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The justice of the rain that loves all leaves;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The loving-kindness of the wayside well;
The tolerance and equity of light
That gives as freely to the shrinking weed
As to the great oak flaring to the wind—
To the grove's low hill as to the Matterhorn
That shoulders out the sky.

And so he came.
From prairie cabin up to Capitol,
One fair Ideal led our chieftain on.
Forevermore he burned to do his deed
With the fine stroke and gesture of a king.
He built the rail-pile as he built the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow,
The conscience of him testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.

So came the Captain with a mighty heart;
And when the step of Earthquake shook the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient hold,
He held the ridgepole up, and spiked again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place—
Held the long purpose like a growing tree—
Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a kingly cedar green with boughs
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.

—EDWIN MARKHAM.

LINCOLN IN NEW YORK CITY.

In October, 1859, after Lincoln has become a national figure through his debates with Senator Douglas on the slavery question, he was invited to lecture in New York by a committee from Plymouth Church. Mr. Herndon, Lincoln's law partner in Springfield, Ill., says that Lincoln was much elated over this invitation and one day said to him, "Billy, I am invited to deliver a lecture in New York, shall I go?" "By all means," replied Herndon, "and it is a good opening, too." "If you were in my fix, what subject would you choose?" said Lincoln. "Why, a po-

litical one, that's your forte," Herndon answered.

On the 25th of February, 1860, he arrived in New York and found that the meeting was to be held in Cooper Institute, instead of Brooklyn. It was Saturday, and he spent the entire day in rehearsing and practising his speech which he had prepared with infinite pains. No effort of his life cost him so much labor as this one. On Sunday he crossed the ferry to Plymouth Church and heard Mr. Beecher preach. It is also stated by several of his biographers that he visited the Five Points House of Industry and addressed the children. Charles Carlton Coffin in his "Life of Lincoln" tells the story of this visit.

In company with Elihu B. Washburne, who was in New York, he made his way to the Mission Sunday School on Sunday afternoon. Five Points was then the most degraded section of the city. The superintendent welcomed them and invited Lincoln to speak. The papers reported this occurrence, and when he returned to Springfield some of his neighbors rather joked him about it. "I see," said one, "you have been making a speech to Sunday-school children down in New York." He replied, "Yes, sit down, Jim, and I'll tell you about it. On Sunday, Washburne said' let's go down to the Five Points Mission.' I was much interested in what I saw, Jim. The superintendent, Mr. Pease, came and shook hands with us. Washburne introduced me to him. He spoke to the children and then I was urged to speak. I told him that I didn't know anything about talking to Sunday schools; but Mr. Pease said that many of the children were homeless and friendless, and I thought of the time when I had been pinched by terrible poverty and so I told them that I had been poor. I remembered when my toes stuck out through my broken shoes in winter, when my arms were out at the elbows and when I shivered with the cold. I told them there was only one rule—that is, to do the very best you can. I told them I had always tried to do the very best I could and if they would follow that rule they would get on somehow. When I got through, Mr. Pease said it was just the thing they needed. When the school was dismissed, all the teachers came up and shook hands with me and thanked me for it, although I didn't know that I was saying anything of any account. I never heard anything that touched me as one of the songs they sang."

The following day, Monday, Mr. Lincoln wandered about the city and saw the sights. When the committee waited upon him at his hotel, the Astor House, in the evening, they found him dressed in a "sleek and shining suit of new black covered with very apparent creases and wrinkles" from having been packed so long in the valise. He was nervous and ill at ease. The reporters called to get copies of his speech for publication the next morning, but he had prepared none, not being sure that the press would care to publish what he had to say.

The hall of Cooper Institute, probably the largest auditorium at that time in the city, was filled with the most intelligent and cultured people of New York. This hall remains practically the same to-day as in 1860. On the platform are the same reading desk and chair used by Lincoln. It is one of the most historic places in New York. For the past fifty years there have been few public men of note who have not spoken from the platform at Cooper Union.

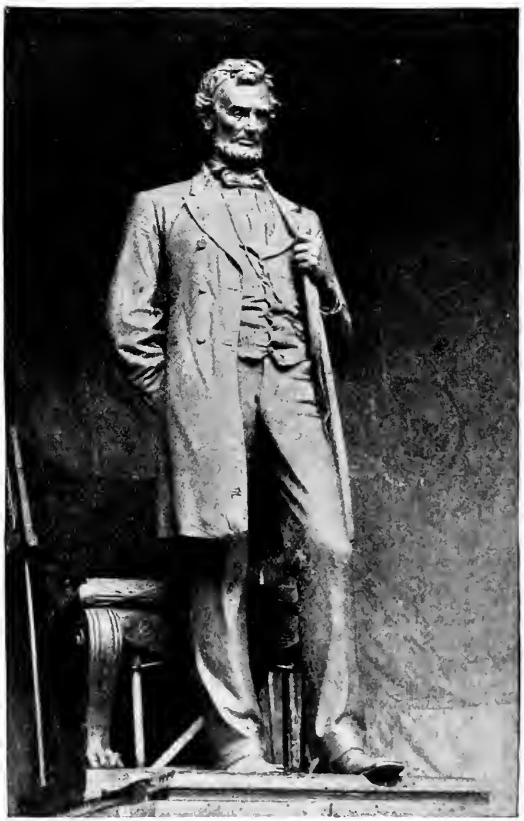
Horace Greeley said in the *Tribune* the morning after Lincoln's speech: "No man has been welcomed by such an audience of the intellectual and mental culture of our city since the days of Clay and Webster." William Cullen Bryant presided at the meeting and introduced the speaker as "an eminent citizen of the west, hitherto known to you only by reputation." There was great curiosity to hear the rough, unkempt prairie orator and stump speaker, who had battled so creditably with the keen mind of Stephen A. Douglas, over the question of slavery extension, and "never was an audience more surprised, never more delighted. Instead of rant, declamation, striking and witty points, it was a calm, clear, learned, dignified and complete exposition of the whole subject. He began speaking in low tones that gradually became louder and clearer as he carried the audience along with him from point to point."

Joseph H. Choate was present that night and forty years afterward said, "When Mr. Bryant presented him on the high platform of Cooper Institute a vast sea of eager upturned faces greeted him, full of intense curiosity to see what this rude child of the people was like. He was equal to the occasion. When he spoke he was transformed; his eye kindled, his voice rang, his face shone and seemed to light up the whole assembly. For an hour and a half he held his audience in the hollow of his hand."

At the conclusion, when Lincoln delivered the famous "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it," the audience rose as one man and cheered loud and long.

The speech was printed in full in the New York papers the next morning and sent broadcast over the country and the peroration became a battle cry of the new party which Lincoln was to lead to victory in the fall.

After the meeting Mr. Hiram Barney and Mr. Charles C. Nott took Mr. Lincoln to their club, the Athenæum, at 108 Fifth Avenue, where a very informal supper was served. They discussed here the chances of the eastern candidates of the Republican Party without suspecting that the speech to which they had just listened would be



STATUE OF LINCOLN BY AUGUSTUS ST. GAUDENS

From Nicolay's Boy's Life of Lincoln. Copyright Century Co., 1906.

the direct means of procuring for Lincoln the nomination at Chicago. When the party broke up that night, they all shook hands cordially and Mr. Nott, who was going downtown, offered to show Mr. Lincoln the way to the Astor House. They started on foot, but Lincoln said his new boots were not very comfortable, so they boarded a Broadway horse-car. When Mr. Nott reached his street, he, too, bade Lincoln good-night, telling him that the car would take him to the door of his hotel. Then Abraham Lincoln went on down Broadway alone, the only occupant of a cold and cheerless horse-car, a stranger, unnoticed, unattended and, as the young man who left him remembered, "appearing particularly sad and lonely."

The next time he rode down Broadway to the Astor House, just one year from this time, he stood erect in an open carriage drawn by four white horses and bowed to cheering crowds that packed the sidewalks, windows and roofs, to do him honor as the President-elect of the United States.

Elbridge S. Brooks in his "True Story of Abraham Lincoln" has the following account of this event:

"When you grow to be men and women and look back at the years that have gone, you will be surprised to find how well you remember things that happened when you were children.

"Certain of the happenings of your young days, you will remember even better than things that occurred later in life.

"Ask your father and mother if this is not so.

"One of those days stands ever out to me—a particularly high-peaked 'hill of heaven.' I was a schoolboy in New York City. It was a February day in 1861. I stood on a crowded street corner. A procession was passing down the street. There was a great crowd. Music was playing. Flags were everywhere. As I peeped out between the surrounding shoulders of the throng that lined the sidewalk, I caught a glimpse of an open carriage, in which stood a tall—as I remember him, a very tall man; his clothes hung loosely, almost ungracefully upon him; he was lifting his hat in acknowledgment of the cheers that greeted him; his hands were large; his arms seemed long and almost ungainly; but his eyes were full of light, and a pleasant smile played over his face, crowned with its high forehead and its thick black hair. Just as I caught a full view of him, he was passing beneath a great flag, stretched across the street; and on the bottom of the flag, as it swayed in the breeze, was flung out this motto in bold letters 'Fear not, Abraham! I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.'

"It was my first and only sight of Abraham Lincoln. Do you wonder that I never forgot it?"

Lincoln, on his way to Washington, reached New York on the afternoon of February 19, 1861. He spoke briefly from the balcony of the Astor House and later a reception was held in the same room where Clay and Webster had each been welcomed. The next morning the President-elect was officially received by Mayor Wood at the City Hall, and spoke from the balcony of that building. On the evening of the 20th he attended the opera at the Academy of Music in Fourteenth Street and Irving Place. Verdi's "Un Ballo in Maschera" was sung. As the curtain fell on the first act the audience noticed Lincoln's presence and cheered him. Then the opera company sang "The Star Spangled Banner." A large American flag with thirty-three stars was lowered from the proscenium and a scene of wild enthusiasm followed. At 8 o'clock on the morning of the 21st the presidential party left for New Jersey.

* * * * * *

Early on the morning of April 15th, 1865, news of the President's assassination reached New York. It came like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky. The wires from Washington had been busy sending reports of Union victories and the prospects of an early peace. Lee had surrendered, and only the day before the flag had been flung out once more above the ruins of Fort Sumter. Business was suspended and people gathered in little groups to talk over the fearful news, too stupefied and dazed to attend to their regular duties. Such universal sorrow was never known in the annals of the country and in no section was there greater grief than in this city. Soon preparations were made for the funeral of the murdered President and it became known that his body was to lie in state in New York. The entire city was clothed in black. Scarcely a dwelling, from the mansions on Fifth avenue to the humblest tenement, was without its sign of mourning. Among other meetings the Board of Education held a special session on the 17th, passed suitable resolutions and several eulogies were pronounced by its members.

President Lincoln's body arrived in New York at 11 o'clock on Monday, April 24. The funeral car was transported from Jersey City to the foot of Desbrosses Street, where it was met by the Seventh Regiment, acting as a guard-of-honor, and representatives of the city and state governments. Every church bell in the city was tolled and several German singing societies chanted requiems as the escort moved up through Hudson Street to Canal, to Broadway to the City Hall through the silent crowds, and streets hung with black. The body lay in the Governor's room in the City Hall for twenty-four hours. All night long thousands stood in line and passed by the bier to look for the last time upon the face of Abraham Lincoln.

On Tuesday, a great procession, five miles in length, escorted the funeral car from the City Hall up Broadway to Fourteenth Street, through Fourteenth Street to Fifth Avenue to Thirty-fourth Street to Ninth Avenue and thence to the depot of the Hudson River Railroad. The Seventh Regiment again acted as guard of honor and was accompanied by all the militia and military companies of the city and hundreds of civic organizations. At half-past four in the afternoon the funeral train drew slowly out of the station amid the tolling of bells and the firing of minute guns, and New York City had seen its last of the great President.

After the obsequies a meeting was held in Union Square. Here George Bancroft delivered an oration to a vast throng and William Cullen Bryant read a funeral ode:

"In sorrow by thy bier we stand,
Amid the awe that hushes all,
And speak the anguish of a land
That shook with horror at thy fall.

Thy task is done; the bond are free;
We bear thee to an honored grave,
Whose proudest monument shall be
The broken fetters of the slave."

TO THE PRINCIPAL

Please distribute a copy of this Bulletin to each grammar grade class. A few extra copies may be had if desired.

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C. G. LELAND,
Superintendent of Libraries.

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